



# The Weekly Wrap Up

April 7, 2006

From Viola Miller, Tennessee's Commissioner for  
The Department of Children's Services

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## U.S. Approves DCS Program Improvement Plan

Two years of very hard work pays off

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services writes that Tennessee has met the improvement goals associated with child abuse and neglect in foster care, foster care re-entries, placement stability and length of time to reunification and length of time to achieve adoption.

This is mighty welcome news. Thanks so much to all who had a hand in the process.

We'll include a copy of the letter with the e-mailed version of today's Wrap Up.

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## We Don't Want To Leave Out A Soul

An urgent note from your hard-working, fun-loving Independent Living staff:

Have you submitted the names of each young person who is graduating this spring? Or of those who have graduated from college, high school, a GED program or a vocational-technical program since July 1, 2005?

This is the last chance you have to get our kids on the list to attend the June 4 Celebration of Excellence Banquet at Opryland and to receive \$250 for this exciting accomplishment. Remember: The graduate must be present to receive the funds.

So if you do not turn in your students' paperwork, they are not going to receive the recognition they deserve. Nor will they be eligible for the money.

Our absolute deadline for receiving the documentation is April 21. We've made this extension to do everything we can to make sure that no deserving student is overlooked.

**Please contact the office of Independent/Transitional Living with any questions:**

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**Or Dave Shonts -- [Dave.Shonts@state.tn.us](mailto:Dave.Shonts@state.tn.us) (615) 253-0027**

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## WATCH OUT FOR THE WOMAN IN THE LONG GREEN SKIRT

Wendy Boyd, armed only with pen, sets off for work:

Starting out this morning I thought the most trouble I would have that day would be the safety plan I needed to work with five children. I couldn't have been more wrong.

Attempting to get a safety plan completed that day, I tracked down the Grandmother. She was at work and wanted me to come there to speak with her.

Now, Grandmother cares for elderly people during the day. So I arrived at the house and met the elderly lady who apparently has Alzheimer's Disease, as she thought I was there to sell her something.

She immediately told me that she didn't have any money and that she didn't like green. (I was wearing a long green skirt.)

The elderly lady also kept trying to read my badge hanging from my shirt -- at one point standing eye-to-eye with me (Actually, it was more my eyes to the top of her head, as she was short).

The Grandmother told the elderly woman that I was there to see her and she got her laid down on the couch. The Grandmother and I sat in the kitchen talking about the situation and what we needed to do to ensure the children's safety.

As we were talking we did not hear the elderly lady get up and make her way out the front door. The next thing that I hear is a banging at the door and the Grandmother is telling someone that Yes, she is indeed the caretaker of this lady.

I heard a man talking very loudly. I got up from my chair with my pen in hand to see what is going on. I first thought that the elderly lady's children found her outside and were upset. (Oh silly me.)

Then I heard a loud commotion in the back of the house. I turned to see a man in camouflage pants and a black top coming in with a gun drawn. He's aiming at me.

Then another one came in behind him with gun drawn and pointed at me too. At this time I am thinking we are being robbed.

Then two uniformed men came running through the front of the kitchen, their guns drawn and pointing at me.

I think, "Hallelujah! The police are here! That was quick!"

Then I think well maybe someone was running from the police and ran in here. At this point I can't move quick enough to get under the table or on the countertop.

Then three other officers -- one uniformed, one in full camo and the other in camo pants -- came at me. And yes, their guns were still drawn and pointing at me.

Finally, one of the officers started screaming, "Stop! It's Wendy from DCS!"

At this point the only thing I could feel was the tight grip I had on my pen. Little did I know that they were there to get *me*.

At this point the elderly lady was laughing hysterically. Grandmother's mouth was on the floor, and I couldn't quit shaking.

Turns out the elderly lady had gone outside and told someone on the street that a woman had come into her house and was trying to run her out of her house.

My attorney called me at this point to approve my plan, and I told her that I would just have to call her back. After everyone left I completed my plan and headed back to the office where I immediately collapsed in my TL's (Joye) chair, told her what happened and attempted to stop shaking.

I knew CPS could be exciting at times, but usually I am on the other side waiting while the police go in and not staring down 7 guns all pointed at me. What a morning!

**Wendy N. Boyd**

Child Protective Services

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## SACWIS Vendors Show Their Wares

On March 14-16, four vendors demonstrated their versions of SACWIS systems that they have implemented for other states. The following lists the vendors who presented and the states with whom they have most recently performed a SACWIS implementation:

**Dynamics Research Corporation** – Ohio SACWIS and Colorado *Trails*

**Accenture** – Texas *IMPACT*

**Deloitte** – Washington DC *FACES.net*

**CGI/AMS** – Wisconsin *eWiSACWIS*

Approximately 40 (20 field staff, 10 Central Office staff, 10 OIS staff) attended the three-day demonstration sessions. Attendees had the opportunity to take a look at SACWIS systems from other states, see different implementations of the same functionality (case recordings, for example) and hear first hand from staff in other states, via conference call, about their experiences during the design and implementation of those systems.

Each system displayed features and functions that attendees felt would be beneficial in support of DCS' business processes. Some favorite features included:

- Banner/message board for quick, efficient communication to all users
- A case-file print feature that allows user to customize a print-out of an entire child/family case file.
- E-reporting – Ability for referents to enter CPS referrals via Internet.
- Mobile technology solutions that will enable users to enter and update case information or assessments while in the field.
- Calendars, worker check-lists, and alerts with direct links to the place in the case record where information needs to be entered.
- Resource Directory and Placement Matching features

Thanks to all the front-line, facilities and Central Office staff who participated in the demo sessions. Your questions and feedback related to the demonstrated systems were very valuable to us in determining what features and functions will provide the most positive impact for our own system.

Additional demonstrations are forthcoming on April 17-18. Stay tuned for details.

**SACWIS Communication Team**

## Core Leadership Meeting: 3/28/06

### Commissioner Comments/Ad hoc reporting:

The Commissioner's retreat will be held at Montgomery Bell State Park on March 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. A Central Office person has been assigned to each region. This will be a working retreat that will focus on the preliminary work on the revision of the Path to Excellence (Road to Reform). The new iteration of the P2E will focus exclusively on qualitative data and information.

The original P2E focused on infrastructure, i.e. adequate staff, salaries, and the CQI/QSR paradigm, Practice Model. The next step has to be done by the regions and they have to take themselves to quality (one family and one child at a time). We are at a critical point as an agency. We can't develop the Road to Reform in Central Office; it has to come from the front line work that we do. The retreat will center on getting regions a focused draft on the themes, goals, and strategies that have been developed. The regions will develop the action steps. We have a group of regions where you see performance improving (Tier 3). There are a middle group of regions moving in the right direction and we believe they will get where they need to be (Tier 2). There are some regions that we are concerned about and will require more time and energy (Tier 1).

### Ad hoc Reporting:

Commissioner Miller stated we should be in position to move away from having to request for ad hoc reporting. We are getting a large number of data sets around many variables. Central Office and regional staff need to use those data sets that are available. DCS had to use ad hoc reporting in the past because we didn't have meaningful data sets, but now we do. The new TNKids build is scheduled for June 6, and we need to rethink coding and extraction for all reports, so please minimize ad hoc reporting. We need to look at how we use R&D staff for analysis rather than ad hoc reporting. We have to change how we view data sets as individual points to viewing data comprehensively (what does this tell us about practice?). The data should paint a picture and tell a story about what's going on.

### Next Steps:

Devote a piece or all of CLT around management list. We need to ensure that CLT members are on the distribution list for data.

Rhonda and Petrina will show everyone samples of what is produced and put management list on the CLT agenda

Michael and Rhonda will provide walkthrough capabilities of new TNKids build at the next CLT.

Judy and Mildred will encourage region to do their own data.

### John B.: Mary Jane Davis

*John B.* is a critical lawsuit and we are going back to court in June 2006. There have been 5 monitors assigned to *John B.* and one has been assigned to DCS (Michael Passino, attorney). None of the monitors are subject matter experts in this area of the law. They are not familiar with this consent decree. Part of our job will be educating the monitors about DCS. The monitors can essentially contact anyone or request anything that relates to health care services for our children that are on TennCare. The monitors will make a report to the court around mid April 2006.

Mary Jane provided copies and discussed the *John B.* Consent Decree with CLT members. Mary Jane will draft protocol to be sent to DCS staff, so they will know what to do if contacted by one of the *John B.* monitors.

### COA: Brenda Bell

DCS has made application and is in the process of completing the financial agreement. We will spell out steps through completion of COA for DCS for example, timeline including date for completion of self-study, when peer reviewers will review our standards.

We will have our administrative standards reviewed first followed by the regions. Three regions will be reviewed at a time. It is extremely important to observe time lines that are established. We can't afford to miss any of our benchmarks. Commissioner suggested adding central office champions in those sessions.

### We are establishing three different training sessions:

7. □ COA Champions – 10 people identified from each region representing staff, foster parents, and community partners.

This will include 4 sessions:

Ø Jackson May 10<sup>th</sup> (Shelby, Southwest, and Northwest), May 12<sup>th</sup> (Northeast, East, and Knox)

Ø Nashville (Davidson, Mid Cumberland and South Central), May 16<sup>th</sup>

Ø Chattanooga (Hamilton Southeast and Upper Cumberland), May 26<sup>th</sup>

COA standards training:

The RA and COA point person for the region as well as Executive Directors and Central Office staff are included in this training on June 27<sup>th</sup> –29<sup>th</sup>.

COA Orientation:

Brenda Bell and Collette Crawley-Martin will provide an overview for staff in the regions as well as Central Office staff.

Standard Review

Standard review teams have been established for each standard and the majority of team leaders have scheduled their meetings. Brenda was pleased with the people selected to participate on the teams.

COA 8<sup>th</sup> edition standards

The COA 8<sup>th</sup> edition standards are on beta version and can be found on the COAnet.org website. There are no significant changes anticipated in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition standards. The 8<sup>th</sup> edition separated out private agency and public agency version information. The format of the standards also changed: Purpose, Core Concept, and Practice Standards.

Mary Ann Burket is developing a COA notebook with all of the standards included for Executive Directors. The notebooks will be ready for distribution on Friday.

We can negotiate the time of the site visits. Bonnie suggested that we begin with Tier 3 regions first. The Commissioner explained that COA goes to another level beyond QSR and Case File audit. They look to see if paper is signed and dated appropriately. If we say it in policy, we better do it because we will be held accountable. Judy Cole stated we could make it real to staff by doing a thorough mock audit.

Brenda and Petrina are looking at every DCS policy and procedure and every format for reporting. We have to look at consistency of how we are delivering services.

Needs Assessment III: Daryl Chansuthus/Susan Mee

Daryl presented a handout to CLT members and outlined areas of inquiry. We are focusing on 3 questions: What does it mean to be a youth who has experienced trauma and who is in out-of-home care? What does it mean to be a youth in out-of-home care

that is transitioning to adulthood? What does it mean to be a public child welfare agency working to achieve positive outcomes for youth?

Daryl explained the process would be addressed in two phases:

- 7.□ Phase I. – reviewing existing information – formal groups, findings related to youth
- 7.□ Phase II – focus groups and stakeholder groups – gather new information and test assumptions Set up ad hoc teams to work around particular issues.

The findings and recommendations on how we move forward will be written in June 2006. The Commissioner suggested that the NGA Proposal for TA for youth transitioning out-of-care be used with this Needs Assessment proposal.

We can anticipate region recruitment and retention dollars around adolescents. We didn't really address transition to adulthood.

Our staff experience difficulty in understanding how to use flex funds and needs assessment to drive good outcomes. We have to figure out how to train our staff.

#### IS Policies: Michael Bowie

7.1 –Reaffirms the Core Leadership Team as the responsible party:

CLT is the focal point and is the CQI team for OIS.

7.5 – New policy that establishes a procedure for initiating new projects

7.8 New Policy governing procurements – establishes three procurement Classes

Contact project manager, Monica Thompson if you have questions about your project request. A project proposal will need to be completed for pending projects by April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Michael stated OIS would purchase an Internet tool called "Spotlight." This tool will track the progress of projects

**Eric Henderson**